

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL LAHORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9521

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMCONSUL KARACHI

DIA

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAHORE 00368

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y P A R A 2 L I N E 5 4 T H W O R D

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PK

SUBJECT: COURT CASE ON RETIRED COLONEL ARRESTED AS MILITARY
DISSENTER

REF: A. ISLAMABAD 2827

B. USDAO 0241 (NOTAL)

C. LAHORE 0336 (NOTAL)

1. ON APRIL 5 , LAHORE HIGH COURT AGREED TO REVIEW
PETITION CHALLENGING ARREST OF RETIRED ARMY COLONEL
ABDUL ALEEM AFRIDI, WHO WAS ONE OF 24 MILITARY
OFFICERS AND CIVILIANS ARRESTED IN LATE MARCH ON
CHARGES OF ATTEMPTING TO SEDUCE MILITARY (REFTEL A).
PETITION FILED BY BEGUM AFRIDI, WIFE OF ARRESTED
COLONEL AND SISTER OF RETIRED AIR MARSHALL ASGHAR KHAN,
LEADER OF OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTY TEHREEK- E-
ISTIQLAL (TI). COURT ALSO ORDERED BOTH GOP AND
GOVT OF PUNJAB, WHICHEVER HOLDING AFRIDI, TO PRODUCE
HIM BEFORE COURT AND INFORM COURT OF CHARGES AGAINST
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HIM.

2. BEGUM AFRIDI' S PETITION STATED THAT HER HOME IN LAHORE WAS SURROUNDED BY CIVILIAN POLICE ON NIGHT OF MARCH 29, SEARCHED, AND HER HUSBAND ARRESTED WITHOUT EXPLANATION OF CHARGES. MRS. AFRIDI EXPLAINED THAT HER YOUNGER SISTER, ZARINA, IS MARRIED TO PAF GROUP COMMANDER AYAZ AHMAD KHAN WHO IS OUT OF COUNTRY FOR TRAINING. ZARINA, WHO RESIDES IN RAWALPINDI, WAS REPEATEDLY TELEPHONED ON NIGHT OF MARCH 31 AND ASKED WHETHER SHE WISHED TO SPEAK TO HER BROTHER- IN- LAW, COLONEL AFRIDI. SHE WAS NOT ALLOWED TO SPEAK TO HIM, BUT COULD HEAR HIS VOICE SHRIEKING IN PAIN DURING EACH CALL.

3. ZARINA WAS ALSO ASKED THE ADDRESSES OF COLONEL AFRIDI' S CHILDREN, AND TOLD CALLER ADDRESSES OF HIS DAUGHTER AND SON, WHO IS ARMY LIEUTENANT. BEGUM AFRIDI TOLD COURT THAT HER YOUNGER BROTHER, TARIQ KHAN, WHO IS TI MEMBER, HAS TWO BROTHERS- IN- LAW, ARMY MAJOR IFTIKHAR ADAM KHAN AND MAJOR FAROUQ ADAM KHAN, AND BOTH APPEARED ON MARCH 31 LIST OF PERSONS ARRESTED. SHE ACCUSED GOVERNMENT OF HARASSING AIR MARSHALL ASGHAR KHAN' S RELATIVES IN ORDER TO EMBARRASS HIM POLITICALLY.

4. VAST MAJORITY OF OUR CONTACTS AGREE WITH ACCUSATION MADE BY MRS. AFRIDI IN IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING SENTENCE. SENIOR LAHORE POLICE OFFICER TOLD US APRIL 6 HE DID NOT BELIEVE CONSPIRACY AMONG ARRESTED PERSONS EXISTED BUT THAT WHOLE SHOW WAS BHUTTO EFFORT TO GET AT ASGHAR KHAN. HE SAID POLICE HAD RECEIVED LIST CONTAINING NAMES OF MOST OF ARRESTED PERSONS SOME TIME AGO WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO GET " SOMETHING, ANYTHING" ON THEM. LIST ALSO CONTAINED ASGHAR KHAN' S ANME. (REFTEL C REPORTED THREE CASES FILED AGAINST HIM UNDER DEFENSE OF PAKISTAN RULES.) ON MARCH 29, POLICE RECEIVED ORDERS TO MAKE ARRESTS. HE GAVE IMPRESSION CIVILIAN POLICE HAD ALSO ARRESTED MILITARY OFFICERS ON ACTIVE DUTY.
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